

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

S E C R E T STATE 247633

EXDIS

TOSEC 322, PARIS ALSO FOR SISCO

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR,MASS, PK, US

SUBJECT: YOUR CONVERSATIONS WITH BHUTTO AND AZIZ AHMED
ON MILITARY SUPPLY

REF: ISLAMABAD 10803 AND 10832

FOR AMBASSADOR FROM DAVIES

1. WE GREATLY APPRECIATE THE SKILL YOU DEMONSTRATED IN
HANDLING THE PRELIMINARY SKIRMISHES ON MILITARY SUPPLY
IN YOUR INITIAL CONVERSAIONS WITH AZIZ AHMED AND BHUTTO.
IT IS DISTURBINGLY, BUT NOT SURPRISINGLY, APPARENT THAT
THEY INTEND TO MAKE MILITARY SUPPLY ISSUE LITMUS TEST OF
YOUR MISSION IN ISLAMABAD AND CENTRAL POLICY QUESTION IN
FUTURE OF U.S.-PAK RELATIONS. GIVEN CONSTRAINTS ON OUR
MILITARY SUPPLY POLICY, AND REASONS THEREFOR WHICH
REMAIN VALID, OUR OBJECTIVE SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE TO AVOID
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EFFORTS TO DEFINE OUR RELATIONSHIP TOO NARROWLY AROUND THIS
ISSUE, AND TO CONTINUE TO STRESS, AS OPPORTUNITIES ARISE,
OTHER ASPECTS OF PAK-U.S. RELATIONSHIP WHICH HAVE GREAT
IMPORTANCE FOR PAKISTAN'S SECURITY AND INTEGRITY.

2. IN THIS REGARD THE RECORD PROVIDES AMPLE DEMONSTRATION OF OUR COMMITMENT TO CLOSE U.S.-PAK RELATIONS AND TO WELFARE OF PAKISTAN, AND YOU WILL WANT TO REMIND AZIZ AHMED AND BHUTTO, AS THEY PRESS MILITARY SUPPLY ISSUE IN FUTURE TALKS, OF THE ELEMENTS INVOLVED IN THAT RECORD. THUS, IN

RELATIVELY BRIEF PERIOD THAT BHUTTO HAS HELD OFFICE, USG HAS PROVIDED APPROXIMATELY DOLS 400 MILLION IN ALL TYPES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. RAPID AND GENEROUS U.S. RESPONSE TO JULY-AUGUST FLOOD DISASTER WAS PARTICULARLY SYMBOLIC OF ATTENTION PAID TO PAKISTAN'S NEEDS AT HIGHEST LEVELS IN USG. ON POLITICAL SIDE, REITERATION OF U.S. SUPPORT FOR PAKISTAN'S INDEPENDENCE AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY (BY PRESIDENT IN HIS WELCOMING REMARKS TO BHUTTO ON SEPTEMBER 18 AND BY REFERENCE IN JOINT STATEMENT AT CONCLUSION OF VISIT), REPRESENTS IMPORTANT PSYCHOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL EVIDENCE OF U.S. LINKS TO PAKISTAN.

3. ON QUESTION OF MILITARY SUPPLY ISSUE ITSELF, BELIEVE YOU SAID JUST THE RIGHT THING TO AZIZ AHMED IN POINTING OUT OUR CONCERN OVER EFFECT THAT CHANGE IN U.S. POLICY WOULD HAVE ON PAK-INDIAN RELATIONS, AS WELL AS INDO-U.S. RELATIONS. WITH PAKISTAN'S ULTIMATE SECURITY DEEPLY DEPENDENT ON RECONCILIATION BETWEEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN, LATTER COULD RUN CONSIDERABLE HAZARD IN PRESSING U.S. TO ASSUME ROLE AS A PRINCIPAL ARMS SUPPLIER TO PAKISTAN. AS SECRETARY EMPHASIZED IN HIS CONFIRMATION HEARINGS IN SEPTEMBER, WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD NOT BE A PRINCIPAL ARMS SUPPLIER IN THE AREA AND THAT WITH RESPECT TO THIS CENTRAL ISSUE, IF ANOTHER WAR BREAKS OUT IN THAT AREA IT WILL NOT BE FOUGHT WITH AMERICAN WEAPONS.

4. FINALLY, WE WOULD APPRECIATE HAVING YOUR ASSESSMENT - AFTER YOU HAVE HAD AMPLE OPPORTUNITY TO FORMULATE IT - OF ACTUAL NEEDS OF PAK ARMED FORCES FOR ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF ARMS. WE HAVE IMPRESSION HERE THAT WITH CHINESE AND FRENCH SUPPLY OF MAJOR LETHAL END-ITEMS, PAKISTAN HAS MORE THAN RECOUPED LOSSES FROM 1971, AND
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THAT PAK MILITARY IS ABLE TO MAINTAIN ADEQUATE DEFENSIVE FORCE IN TERMS OF FORESEEABLE THREATS IT MAY MEET, EVEN ALLOWING FOR LOGISTIC DIFFICULTIES POSED BY MIXTURE OF EQUIPMENT TYPES. PAKISTAN IS ALSO SUBSTANTIALLY STRONGER MILITARILY VIS-A-VIS INDIA THAN RATIOS OF POPULATION OR GNP WOULD SUGGEST, AS IS INDICATED IN INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY PRODUCT TITLED "SOUTH ASIA MILITARY HANDBOOK". COPY OF THIS PUBLICATION BEING POUCHED TO ISLAMABAD AND NEW DELHI.

5. ALONG WITH YOUR ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS, WE WOULD APPRECIATE HAVING YOUR THOUGHTS ON WHAT PAKS ARE REALLY AFTER IN URGING CHANGE OF OUR MILITARY SUPPLY POLICY.

FOR EXAMPLE, DOES BHUTTO SEEK ONLY A LIFTING OF US EMBARGO ON SALE OF LETHAL END-ITEMS, SO THAT PAKISTAN COULD SIMPLY SHIFT PURCHASES FROM EUROPEAN SUPPLIERS TO AMERICAN SOURCES, WITH LITTLE OR NO DIRECT IMPACT ON SIZE AND QUALITY OF PAK FORCES? OR DOES BHUTTO ENVISAGE A REVISED U.S. POLICY THAT WOULD ENTAIL SUBSTANTIAL GRANT AID ELEMENT - AN EVENTUALITY ALMOST INCONCEIVABLE GIVEN CONGRESSIONAL ATTITUDES TOWARD MILITARY ASSISTANCE GRANTS IN GENERAL AND AGAINST PROVISION OF MAJOR ARMAMENTS TO PAKISTAN IN PARTICULAR? OR IS BHUTTO SIMPLY ENDEAVORING TO BROADEN AND STRENGTHEN OUR POLITICAL COMMITMENT BY DEMANDING AN END TO THE EMBARGO IN HOPES OF OBTAINING SOME FORM OF POLITICAL UNDERTAKING WHICH COMMITS U.S. MORE CERTAINLY THAN IN 1959 BILATERAL? RUSH

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